

RELEASED IN FULL

INFO LOG-00 AF-00 INL-00 PDI-00 EAP-00 EB-00 EUR-00
UTED-00 TEDE-00 IO-00 LAB-01 NEA-00 DCP-00 NSAE-00
PM-00 GIWI-00 DOHS-00 IRM-00 STR-00 BBG-00 IIP-00
PMB-00 DRL-00 G-00 SAS-00 /001W
-----7DE795 121609Z /38

O 121506Z JAN 06
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3034
INFO CIA WASHINGTON DC
DEPARTMENT OF TREASURY WASHDC
DIA WASHINGTON DC//ASD/ISA//
SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
USDOC WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
USMISSION USNATO
USMISSION USOSCE
COMSIXTHFLT

UNCLAS PARIS 000212

DEPT FOR INR/R/MR; IIP/RW; IIP/RNY; BBG/VOA; IIP/WEU; AF/PA;
EUR/WE /P/SP; D/C (MCCOO); EUR/PA; INR/P; INR/EUC; PM; OSC ISA
FOR ILN; NEA; WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC/WEUROPE; DOC FOR ITA/EUR/FR
AND PASS USTR/PA; USINCEUR FOR PAO; NATO/PA; MOSCOW/PA;
ROME/PA; USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE.

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: OPRC, KMDR, FR

SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION REPORT - Iran GWOT - Guantanamo Israel
PARIS - Thursday, January 12, 2006

(A) SUBJECTS COVERED IN TODAY'S REPORT:

Iran
GWOT - Guantanamo
Israel

B) SUMMARY OF COVERAGE:

Two stories lead today, Iran and the conundrum facing the international community, and Guantanamo. Le Figaro, Le Monde and La Croix lead with Iran. La Croix asks "Why Does Iran Play With Nuclear Fire?" Le Figaro headlines "The West's Embarrassed Stance" while Le Monde leads with: "Iran Takes One

UNCLASSIFIED

More Step Towards Nuclear Escalation." While Le Monde's editorial explains why the West is caught up in "The Iranian Trap," Le Figaro devotes a full page to "Washington's Search for a Response to the Iranian Challenge," and to "The EU-3 and the UN." One op-ed emphasizes why "it is urgent to answer the challenge" and the other contends "an embargo is necessary against the Ayatollahs." (See Part C)

Liberation carries a two-page report on "Guantanamo: Four Years Outside the Law." For the editorialist, Guantanamo and the methods used are in themselves "a defeat of democracy, because the war against terror does not require the use of similar (terror) methods." One story is devoted to detainees being abused, "according to witness reports from lawyers made to Amnesty International, which "has not visited the base." (See Part C) Liberation also interviews Eugene Fifell, a U.S. lawyer specializing in military law: "The concept of 'illegal combatants' is perfectly legitimate. but the U.S. has not abided by the Geneva Convention. A special tribunal should have been created. While pressure is on the U.S. to send back detainees to their home countries, I do not believe the U.S. will dismantle Guantanamo. This is a prison built to stay."

The government's response to the threat of an Avian flu epidemic is today's other major story. Le Figaro details France's plan as revealed by the Health Minister, Xavier Bertrand, who is interviewed in France Soir: "By 2007, France will have stocked 33 million doses of anti-viral medication. The World Health Organization has determined France is among the best prepared countries (to deal with an epidemic.)" In Le Figaro, Alexandre Adler doubts "that Ehud Olmert can bring peace to the Middle East conflict, not unless progress is made in Iraq, Syria and Iran." In Liberation, Jacques Amalric writes on "Netanyahu, the Nightmare," for the Middle East and for the Bush administration. (See Part C)

(C) SUPPORTING TEXT/BLOCK QUOTES:

Iran

"Determination"

Guillaume Goubert in right-of-center La Croix (01/12):

"Determination is necessary with regard to Iran but also North Korea. The way both nations are playing with the international community, one step forward and two backward, demands a full stop. This is why it appears today that the UNSC is the only possible recourse available. We must not fool ourselves about the effectiveness of the means available to pressure Iran. The Iraqi example proves that the most severe economic sanctions can remain useless when dealing with a dictatorial regime. But

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

if the UNSC is sufficiently firm, it may influence a country that aspires to play an international role. This may also help contain other nuclear ambitions in the Middle East, like Saudi Arabia's. But the fight against nuclear proliferation requires that the other nuclear powers take a step back. Why do they (the U.S., France, Russia, China, Great Britain, India, Pakistan) have more rights than Iran to develop their nuclear arsenal? The argument of democratic control does not hold for countries such as China or Pakistan. Nuclear disarmament has been forgotten for too long. It needs to be debated again."

"The Iranian Trap"

Left-of-center Le Monde in its editorial (01/12): "On January 10 Iran took one more step in its confrontation with the West. The Europeans are caught between two concerns: re-launching nuclear proliferation in a sensitive region, which is also close-by, and a unilateral military action by either the Americans or the Israelis. The Europeans have therefore chosen the way of negotiations. Iran has tried to undermine every agreement, as if it was testing the Europeans. Washington has supported the EU-3 initiative, from a distance and later more firmly. Meanwhile Iran has been using every hesitation to its advantage, including Europe's negotiations with Russia and China. But it may have gone too far. The U.S. is mired in Iraq and wants to avoid confrontation with this largely Shiite nation. It is therefore counting on negotiations and sanctions. The Iranians seem impervious to the threat. They are counting on a divergence between Russia and China, and on Europe's leniency. It is high time we proved to Iran it is making a mistake and that the trap is slowly closing in."

"Diplomacy Versus Action"

Philippe Gelie in right-of-center Le Figaro (01/12): "Iran is not Iraq. After three years of going to battle almost single handedly against Saddam Hussein, the U.S. approach to Iran looks like the exact opposite. Diplomacy, a gradual progression and the search for a consensus seem to be the key words in Washington. But the word 'action' still applies to both situations. Washington has always remained firm towards Iran. But for the hardliners in Washington, the diplomatic approach (of the EU-3) has not proven its effectiveness. Under pressure, the Bush administration is looking over its options, including a program of 'multilateral sanctions' with the Europeans. The military option remains on the table, but this time around it looks very much like an option of last resort."

"Why It Is Urgent to Respond to the Iranian Challenge"

Pierre Lellouche, the head of the Parliamentary Assembly group on NATO, in right-of-center Le Figaro (01/12): "The difference between Hitler and Ahmadinejad is that the former failed where

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

the latter is succeeding: building the bomb. What is the rest of the Muslim world saying? Nothing. The way things are going Ahmadinejad's Iran will have the bomb in a year or two at most. Before the situation gets totally out of hand, the UNSC must get involved with the hope that it will not, once again, prove its lack of effectiveness."

"Imposing an Embargo on the Ayatollahs"

Bernard Debre, a former Minister for Cooperation, in right-of-center Le Figaro (01/12): "Instead of being firm, the West is half-heartedly condemning Iran. Will we have to wait until Iran carries out nuclear testing. or allies with Afghan, Pakistani, Iraqi and Syrian extremists? And it's possible this has already happened. Now is the time to act, while Iran is still hesitant. The intervention in Iraq., which has led to. civil war and extremism., should not prevent us from taking action against Iran. This is why an embargo is necessary. The days of drawing room diplomacy are over."

GWOT - Guantanamo

"Defeat"

Antoine de Gaudemar in left-of-center Liberation (01/12): "Four years later, Guantanamo remains true to its sinister reputation. Among the five hundred detainees. not all were made prisoners in Afghanistan: some were arrested illegally in other countries. This scandal is one of many. Only nine detainees in Guantanamo have been formally charged. Despite a Supreme Court decision, arbitrary attitudes and ill-treatment of detainees continue. Such lack of transparency suggests the worst may be happening, as witness reports indicate. The only glimmer of hope is the release of a few detainees, after months of detention, often without reason. Along with the torture of prisoners in Iraqi prisoners and CIA secret prisons, Guantanamo symbolizes that which is most detestable

in the Bush administration: the desire to stand above domestic and international law. Because the fight against terror does not require the use of those methods used by terrorists, the existence of Guantanamo in itself stands as a serious defeat of democracy."

Israel

"Netanyahu, the Nightmare"

Jacques Amalric in left-of-center Liberation (01/12): "The new situation in Israel is leaving the Bush Administration perplexed. While President Bush supported Sharon unconditionally, his disappearing from the political scene will undoubtedly revive the divergence between the realists,

UNCLASSIFIED

UNCLASSIFIED

such as Secretary Rice, and the staunch partisans of Netanyahu and Greater Israel, a concept which the Christian Right is defending with furious energy."

"Questions on the Future of Israel"

Alexandre Adler in right-of-center Le Figaro (01/12): "One of the questions surfacing about Israel's future is whether Olmert can indeed make peace. The answer is no. Peace will be delayed as long as the Middle East has not found a solid base. And this will be possible only if three things happen simultaneously: stabilization of Iraq, Bachar el-Assad's victory over Syria's hard-liners, and the marginalizing, or better yet, the elimination of Ahmadinejad in Iran. It is possible to achieve these three goals. Sharon's unilateral withdrawal was part of a wider regional stabilization plan. But until the wider plan is underway, Israel is condemned to act with staunch determination, yet without guarantees for success." STAPLETON

NNNN

UNCLASSIFIED